



F S A O m b u d s m a n

We Help Put America Through School

Ombudsman Fast Facts

1 Is an impartial, confidential resource for resolving student loan complaints informally.

2 Is available after other customer service avenues have failed.

3 Does not force solutions, reverse decisions, or mandate actions.

4 Analyzes case data for potential of systemic change.

5 Resolves long-standing issues.

6 Works cooperatively with schools, loan holder and guaranty agency partners to assist borrowers.

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Serves customers whose average age is 37 and whose loans have been in repayment for 6 years

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The Ombudsman office is where borrowers can turn after trying other ways to resolve a student loan dispute. The office receives hundreds of calls, letters, and emails each month. There are two types of cases:

General Assistance –

- These are one-issue cases in which borrowers need information or guidance on ways to resolve their problem.
- Most of these are closed immediately, in the first phone call.

Research Problem Assistance –

These cases involve multiple issues. An Ombudsman Specialist works with the borrower, lender, schools, and other parties to gather the facts, establish a common understanding of the problem, and identify solutions.

- Research cases often require 30 to 60 days to resolve.
- Main issues (in order of frequency):
 - Account balance
 - Loan cancellation/discharge
 - Default
- Problems involve 36 active and 16 inactive guaranty agencies, 742 lenders, and 2,597 schools. The average customer is 37 years old, has 6 loans and has been in repayment for 6 years. The oldest disputed loan dates back to 1967.
- Ombudsman customers' loans represent all school types.
 - Public 50.08%
 - Private, Non-Profit 35.03%
 - Proprietary 14.21%
 - Foreign . 68%
- Ombudsman customers hold different types of loans
 - FFEL 76.80%
 - Direct Loan 15.08%
 - Perkins 8.12%
- In 1999-2000, there were 7,833 cases.
- In 2001-2002 there were 13, 611 cases.

For the first three quarters in 2001-2002, the number of general assistance inquiries is up and the number of research problem cases is static.

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